

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-07 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03

USIA-15 SAM-01 OES-05 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00

FRB-01 PA-02 PRS-01 ACDA-10 /128 W

----- 125155

R 281000Z JUN 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2145

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS BAGHDAD 698

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELEC, IZ

SUBJECT: RUSSIANS BEING BLAMED FOR BAGHDAD ELECTRIC POWER CRISIS

1. ELECTRIC POWER SITUATION IN BAGHDAD IS BAD AND GROWING WORSE. BEGINNING MIDDLE OF JUNE ALL REGIONS OF BAGHDAD METROPOLITAN AREA HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO DAILY ELECTRIC BROWNOUTS AND OR BLACKOUTS. ON JUNE 23 ENTIRE CITY WAS PLUNGED INTO TWO HOURS OF DARKNESS FROM 9:00 TO 11:00 PM. AFTER AN INTIAL PERIOD OF SILENCE, GOI ELECTRIC CITY AUTHORITES ARE NOW APPEARING ON TELEVISION AT FREQUENT INTERVALS TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAS GONE WRONG. DURING TV APPEARANCE JUNE 25 DIRECTOR GENERAL OF STATE ORGANIZATION OF ELECTRICITY ABSOLVED HIS ORGANIZATION FROM ALL BLAME FOR SITUATION, PLACING RESPONSIBILITY SQUARELY ON USSR WHICH, HE SAID, HAD FAILED TO INSTALL SEVERAL GENERATORS NEAR BASRA ON SCHEDULE IN 1974. DG ADDED THAT SVOETS HAVE AGREED INSTALL AT LEAST ONE GENERATOR THIS SUMMER ON CRASH BASIS.

2. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IRAQ IS BEGINNING TO PAY THE PRICE FOR ITS MIDDLE-CLASS CONSUMER ORIENTED BRAND OF SOCIALISM.

DURING 1974 UNPRECENTED NUMBER OF AIRCONDITIONERS,

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FREEZERS, TV SETS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES WERE

IMPORTED AND THE SYSTEM CANNOT CURRENTLY RESPOND TO PEAK DEMAND. LIFE IN THE GREAT METROPOLIS TAKES ON TINGE OF GLOOM AS EVEN THE TRADIONAL MORNING TELEVISION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN HOME FROM SCHOOL HAVE BEEN STOPPED IN EFFORT TO SAVE ENERGY. EQUALY IF NOT MORE ANNOYING TO THE MIDDLE-CLASS BAGHDADI IS THE SUDEEN DECREASE IN AVAILABILITY OF WATER (PUMPED TO ROOF TOP STORAGE TANKS), WHICH CAUSE BY INADEQUATE CITY FILTRATION SYSTEM. WITH LITTLE OR NO WATER IN THE TANKS THE "DESERT COOLERS" WHICH ARE STILL THE PREVALENT MODE OF DOMESTIC AIR-CONDITIONING ARE INEFFECTIVE. WITH THE TWO HOTTEST MONTHS OF THE YEAR JUST AHEAD, THE PROSPECT IS FOR MUCH GREATER THAN USUAL OR FORESEEN PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT FOR THE BAGHDADIS.

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